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ABSTRACT

Information about deans that may be helpful to department chairs is presented, based on the findings of four national surveys of deans. The surveys of social science, graduate, continuing education, and arts and sciences deans covered the deans' role in resource allocation to departments, teaching and research support for faculty, tenure and promotion decisions, and departmental evaluations. Seven points of interest to department chairs are presented: deans do not always communicate adequately with faculty and chairs about resource availability, goals, and priorities; deans almost always support teaching verbally; teaching quality is the most important factor in tenure decisions; deans rarely commit funds to improve weak departments; teaching deans do not show unusually strong support for teaching; institutional policies and traditions regarding teaching are inconsistent, uncoordinated, and confused; and support for research is subject to similar (but less serious) inconsistencies than support for teaching. Ways to increase the dean's communication with the department are suggested, along with an approach to urge consistency of behavior with the administrator's ideals and verbal utterances. Information on the survey methodologies is included, along with statistical findings of the studies. (SW)

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WHAT EVERY DEPARTMENT CHAIR SHOULD KNOW ABOUT THE DEAN: FINDINGS FROM FOUR NATIONAL SURVEYS

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PRECIS

Data from four national surveys of deans (social science deans, 1977; graduate deans, 1982; continuing education deans, 1983; and arts and sciences deans, 1984) are presented to highlight selected characteristics of deans in action. These include resource allocation to departments, teaching and research support for faculty, tenure and promotion decisions, and departmental evaluations. The paper is designed to provide department chairs with the information they need to successfully deal with the dean and thus participate more fully in institutional governance than would otherwise be the case.

This paper has been developed as a data report instead of being written in strict journal article format. Since the time allotted for presentation is short, we will limit our material to a brief summary of the methodologies of the four national surveys, seven conclusions from these surveys that we believe are of interest to department chairs, and some suggestions for strategies and techniques chairs can use to increase their success when dealing with their deans.

Survey Methodologies

Table 1 constitutes a methodological abstract of the four surveys on which this paper is based. The first survey was carried out by members of the American Sociological Association's Task Force on the Institutional Context of Teaching, which was chaired by Hans O. Mauksch and Lee H. Bowker. The other three surveys were developed at IUP's Institute for Advanced Research by the authors. Seven years passed between the ASA survey and the study of liberal arts administration. Response rates varied from 49 percent to 53 percent. Nonintrusive techniques were used out of respect for the professionals in higher education. We limited ourselves to mailed questionnaires with a single follow-up letter, even though that had the effect of depressing return rates. The overall response rate of 49 percent in the ASA project is broken down by respondent's position in Table 1 because there was such a large differential between the 81 percent response rate for the social science deans in the sample and the 40 percent rate for sociology faculty drawn from the same set of institutions. An appraisal of the ASA survey is further complicated by differential response rates for the three strata created through the disproportionate stratified random sampling methodology. Respondents in universities and four-year colleges returned a much higher proportion of the questionnaires than their

colleagues in community colleges. This effect was most pronounced among department chairs, for whom response rates declined from 76 percent in universities to 27 percent in community colleges.

The graduate deans survey utilized the membership list of the Council of Graduate Schools in the United States plus all the non-GCS members listed in Peterson's Guide to Graduate Education and reporting a full-time equivalent enrollment of 200 or more graduate students. The continuing education deans sampling frame was constructed from mailing labels provided by the Peterson's Guide organization. In order to construct a sampling frame for chief liberal arts academic officers, who are usually deans in complex universities but often vice-presidents or provosts in smaller institutions, Peterson Guide mailing labels for arts and sciences deans and academic vice-presidents were integrated into a single list from which a 50 percent random sample was selected for participation in the study. Job titles and, where necessary, administrative structures were examined in order to determine the chief liberal arts academic officer in each institution.

The relatively low response rates obtained through our chosen methodology render generalization from our samples to the condition of higher education nationally technically impossible. At the same time, the remarkable consistency of the results on almost all points from one survey to another gives us a stronger feeling that our findings are typical of American colleges and universities than would be possible from a single survey with a much higher return rate.

Some Points of Interest to Department Chairs

1. Deans do not always communicate adequately with faculty and chairs about resource availability, goals, and priorities. The ASA survey included many sets of parallel questions that were put to social science deans, sociology chairs and sociology faculty members working in the same sample of institutions. Responses to these questions revealed a consistent gradient of opinion from deans through chairs to faculty members on all but a few items. Table 2 illustrates some of the strongest and weakest gradients observed in the ASA study. These items concern the extent to which specified professional activities are likely to lead to positive decisions on tenure, promotion, or merit salary increases. (Similar results were obtained for various categories of resource availability in support of teaching and research.)

What does it mean when 65 percent of the deans but only 39 percent of the faculty members believe that exerting major efforts to revise and improve the curriculum will be considered when determinations are made about tenure, promotion, and merit salary increases? Most probably, it means that deans are not taking care to communicate well with faculty members. Most certainly, it means that faculty members are not being motivated to work toward institutional goals as well as they could be. Are deans somehow hindered from communicating adequately with faculty? We think not, for the communication gradient observed for activities that are related to teaching excellence disappears for activities related to excellence in research, publication, and scholarship. Faculty appear to understand quite clearly the extent to which publishing an article in a refereed professional journal, publishing a book, or serving as an editor of a professional journal are likely to be rewarded by consideration toward tenure, promotion, and merit salary increases.

2. Deans almost always support teaching verbally. Ask a dean about the most important goal of the college or university, and the answer is invariably excellence in teaching. Table 3 shows that only 4 percent of the graduate deans, 1 percent of the continuing education deans, and none of the chief liberal arts academic officers defined teaching quality as being somewhat or not important in their assessments of department and program quality. The majority of the graduate deans and six out of every seven continuing education deans and chief liberal arts academic officers reported that teaching quality was very important in their department and program assessments.

Social science deans in the 1977 ASA survey were also extremely strong in their support of teaching. They ranked six major factors in their assessment of departments and divisions under their supervision rather than estimating the importance of each factor separately. Teaching performance had a mean rank of 1.2. Internal reputation was the second most important factor, at 2.5. The other assessment factors were national reputation (3.0), student enrollment (3.1), publications (4.0) and research grants (4.6).

3. Teaching quality is the most important factor in tenure decisions. Table 4 shows that teaching is the most important factor in tenure decisions according to chief liberal arts academic officers (92 percent), continuing education deans (80 percent), and graduate deans (59 percent). It is particularly interesting to note the high weighting of teaching reported by graduate deans, in view of the close association of graduate education with research and publishing. Only at the most research-oriented graduate institutions does research replace teaching as the most important criterion in tenure decisions (see Table 5).

The ASA survey used a slightly different methodology to ascertain the weighting of factors in tenure decisions. When social science deans were asked to rank those tenure factors, teaching predominated with a mean rank of 1.4. The mean ranks for all the other factors ranged from 3.5 to 3.9. The social science deans also indicated how much importance each factor should be given in tenure decisions, and these ideal rankings differed only sightly from the actual weighting of the tenure factors.

Consistency is a wonderful thing. The tenure decision-making process would have seemed beyond criticism had we not asked the same questions in a third way. The social science deans were requested to indicate which among a long list of faculty activities would be likely to result in commendations, consideration for a merit salary increase, or consideration toward promotion and tenure. The six teaching activities were defined as relevant to promotion and tenure decisions by between 6 percent and 24 percent of the deans, while the three publishing activities were seen as relevant to promotion and tenure decisions by between 40 and 49 percent of the deans. This evidence leads us to believe that generalized verbal support for teaching begins to break down when it comes to evaluating specific teaching-related activities such as teaching innovations, extensive curriculum development, organizing academically-oriented student associations, and participating in teacher development workshops.

4. Deans rarely commit funds to improve weak departments. They give top priority in resource allocation to the support of departments that are already good or excellent. Table 6 presents data on the resource allocation policies of the four groups of academic administrators. Willingness to dedicate substantial funds for the upgrading of fair or inferior programs is rare among all of them. Fair or inferior programs are most likely to find a sympathetic ear among social science deans and least

likely to receive support from graduate deans. The "star system" of resource allocation dominates higher education at the departmental level, if these data are representative of the resource allocation priorities of all college and university administrators.

5. Teaching deans do not show unusually strong support for teaching. Common sense would lead us to assume that deans who teach would be much more supportive of teaching than deans who have not taught a course for many years. Our studies have consistently produced results that run counter to this assumption. Some of the correlations leading us to the conclusion that teaching deans show no particular sympathy for teaching are presented in Table 7. The single statistically significant relationship out of the 18 correlations displayed in the table is not in the predicted direction. Career contingencies and institutional traditions (as well as collective bargaining agreements in some colleges and universities) probably obscure the assumed effect of a pro-teaching stance on the dean's actual service in the classroom, thus undercutting the assumption that teaching deans are particularly likely to support teaching.

6. Institutional policies and traditions regarding teaching are inconsistent, uncoordinated, and confused. The final paragraph under point three describes an inconsistency between generalized support for teaching and the consideration of specific teaching-related activities in tenure and promotion decisions. Table 8 includes three additional examples of inconsistency with regard to college and university teaching. The correlations for these three relationships are .22, .17, and .04. Although the first two of the correlations are statistically significant, they explain only a few percent of the variance in their respective relationships. Faculty who claim that there is a disjunction between resource allocation, standards, and rewards in colleges and universities

are not just being cynical. There is much evidence in support of their observation.

Universities are complex organizations that are imperfectly integrated. Decisions on matters such as departmental evaluations, resource allocation, tenure, promotion, and merit salary increases are not made by the same individual or group of individuals, and they are not made using the same set of standards and operationalizations for those standards. The low correlations among resources, standards and rewards for teaching no doubt distress administrators as well as faculty. The looseness of these associations is due to factors such as administrative inattention and convoluted institutional decision-making processes rather than to the deliberate application of an administrative policy designed to undermine the teaching enterprise.

7. Support for research is subject to similar (but less serious) inconsistencies than support for teaching. The three research relationships in Table 8 all have stronger relationships than the three teaching relationships in the table. Correlations of .44, .40, and .27 are a great improvement over .22, .17, and .04. Unfortunately, they still leave much to be desired from the viewpoint of faculty who want to work in a fully integrated and rationalized environment.

These correlations take on new meaning when we translate them into proportions of institutions in which there is a reasonable degree of consistency between the chief liberal arts academic officer's assessment of departments and programs on one hand and tenure decisions on the other hand. The variables in these relationships were dichotomized for ease of interpretation. In the first relationship, 212 institutions showed a

reasonable degree of consistency between publications in department/program evaluations and tenure decisions. Ninety-four were inconsistent, the most common inconsistency being a low emphasis on publications in departmental and program evaluations juxtaposed with a higher emphases on publications in tenure decisions. Similar results were obtained for the relationship between grants in department/program evaluations and resesarch in tenure decisions. Ninety-eight institutions were inconsistent, as compared with 214 which were reasonably consistent.

Strategies and Techniques for Dealing with the Dean

A comprehensive treatment of strategies and techniques department chairs can use to improve their success in dealing with the dean would fill a lengthy monograph. We will be content to conclude this paper with a few examples of the strategic implications of points one through seven for dealing with the dean. These implications are not universal. Readers must decide to what extent our generalizations apply in the institutional settings with which they are familiar.

Chairs who suspect that their deans are not communicating adequately might want to consider using direct probes to attempt to find out more about the dean's resources and standards. Personal meetings, well-documented requests for funds, inviting deans to department meetings, and involving them in the development of long-range department plans are examples of ways to increase the dean's communication with the department.

What good is it that a dean gives strong verbal support to teaching if there is little follow-up when it comes to resource allocation and various evaluation procedures? An inconsistency between word and deed can be turned to the advantage of the weaker party through the use of Mathiesen's

concept of censoriousness. In censoriousness, the chair uses the moral standards and policies of an administrator to urge consistency of behavior with the administrator's ideals, standards, and verbal utterances. "I know that you give top priority to teaching, so it would seem appropriate for you to provide funds for department faculty to attend this teaching workshop" is a simple example of censoriousness in practice. Censoriousness is particularly useful in the chair's campaign to obtain tenure for a faculty member who is an outstanding teacher but an unproductive researcher.

Some chairs believe that the best way to secure funding from the dean is to emphasize the department's deficiencies. They assume that deans can not tolerate poor quality in educational service delivery. Our findings show that this approach to departmental resource acquisition is counterproductive. It is better to develop a carefully supported argument that the department is already good, and that the allocation of additional funds for specific purposes could make it still better, perhaps even noteworthy.

A final recommendation drawn from the preceding points concerns the many inconsistencies among policies, goals, evaluations, and patterns of resource allocation with respect to teaching and research in higher education. These inconsistencies can be turned into an advantage by a chair who is skilled in institutional politics and knowledgeable about institutional traditions and current practices. The greater the inconsistencies, the more likely a chair is to be able to cite some precedent for whatever the department is proposing at the moment. In such institutions, governance proceeds as much through political skill as by the rule of law.

Summary

Our intent in this paper has been to provide department chairs with information from our research that may be useful as they attempt to maximize their success in negotiations with the dean. At the same time, the paper communicates to the higher education professional community a number of the characteristics of deans in action--most importantly in resource allocation to departments, teaching and research support for faculty, tenure and promotion decisions, and departmental evaluations.

Data from four national surveys of educational administrators have been presented. The first of these surveys was carried out in 1977 by a team of researchers that included the senior author. It randomly sampled deans who supervised social science departments and was stratified by level of institution (community colleges, four year colleges and universities). The other three surveys were conducted by the authors of this paper using either random sampling or 100 percent sampling. Graduate deans were sampled in 1982, continuing education deans in 1984 and chief liberal arts academic officers also in 1984.

The major findings about deans presented in this paper are as follows:

(1) Deans do not always communicate adequately with faculty and chairs about resource availability, goals, and priorities.

(2) Deans almost always support teaching verbally.

(3) Teaching quality is the most important factor in tenure decisions.

(4) Deans rarely commit funds to improve weak departments.

(5) Teaching deans do not show unusually strong support for teaching.

(6) Institutional policies and traditions regarding teaching are inconsistent, uncoordinated, and confused.

(7) Support for research is subject to similar (but less serious) inconsistencies than support for teaching.

The final section of the paper contains four suggestions about how to improve the dean's communication with the department, the usefulness of censoriousness in minimizing the effects of the power imbalance between chairs and deans, the ineffectiveness of emphasizing departmental deficiencies in hopes of increasing funding, and the secondary gains derived from inconsistencies in poorly integrated academic organizations.

Table 1. Methodological Abstract of Four National Surveys

Methodological Details	Survey			
	American Sociological Association	Graduate Deans	Continuing Education Deans	Chief Liberal Arts Academic Officers
Year conducted	1977	1982	1984	1984
Number of cases	157* 276** 171***	338	410	371
Response rate	81%* 46%** 40%***	53%****	49%	50%
Sampling method	Disproportionate stratified random by highest degree offered	100% sample	50% random sample	50% random sample
Source	ASA address list	Peterson's Guide, CGS membership list	Peterson's Guide	Peterson's Guide

* Social science deans

** Sociology chairs

*** Sociology faculty

**** 68% for Council of Graduate School members and 33% for non-members.

Table 2. Proportion of Respondents Indicating That Activities Are Rewarded by Consideration Toward Tenure, Promotion, or a Merit Salary Increase

Activity	Deans	Chairs	Faculty
Team teaching with another faculty member in the same department			
Four-Year Colleges	19%	8%	4%
Universities	25%	14%	8%
Team teaching with a faculty member in another discipline			
Four-year Colleges	25%	8%	6%
Universities	21%	17%	8%
Developing a multi-disciplinary major for undergraduates			
Four-year Colleges	45%	31%	33%
Universities	40%	40%	18%
Participating in a teacher development workshop			
Four-Year Colleges	36%	23%	15%
Universities	27%	30%	15%
Exerting major efforts to revise and improve the curriculum			
Four-Year Colleges	65%	39%	39%
Universities	74%	58%	23%
Publishing an article in a refereed professional journal			
Four-Year Colleges	59%	66%	59%
Universities	87%	90%	84%
Publishing a book			
Four-year Colleges	68%	68%	73%
Universities	91%	92%	85%
Serving as an editor of a professional journal			
Four-Year Colleges	68%	67%	63%
Universities	81%	82%	71%
N	109	214	146

Source: Adapted from Lee H. Bowker, "The College Dean: A Case of Miscommunication about the Importance of Teaching." Liberal Education, 67 (Winter 1981): 325.

Table 3. Importance of Teaching Quality in the Assessment of Department and Program Quality by Graduate Deans, Continuing Education Deans, and Chief Liberal Arts Academic Officers[a]

Teaching Importance	Graduate Deans	Continuing Education Deans	Chief Liberal Arts Academic Officers
Very important	62%	86%	87%
Important	33%	12%	13%
Somewhat important	4%	0%	0%
Not important	0%	1%	0%
N	333	410	368

[a]Column percentages may not sum 100.0, due to standard rounding procedures.

Table 4. Weighting of Teaching Quality in Tenure Decisions

Weighting of Teaching	Graduate Deans	Continuing Education Deans	Chief Liberal Arts Academic Officers
1 (highest)	59%	80%	92%
2	11%	6%	5%
3	28%	14%	3%
4	2%	0%	0%
5, 6 (lowest)	0%	0%	0%
N	324	310	343

Table 5. Relationship Between the Availability of Funds for Research by Untenured Faculty and the Weighting of Teaching in Tenure Decisions[a]

Weighting of Teaching	Availability of Research Funds[b]		
	Excellent or Good	Fair	Poor
1 (highest)	44%	65%	73%
2	14%	10%	11%
3-6 (lowest)	43%	25%	17%
N	115	116	85

[a]Graduate deans data set.

[b]Column percentages may not sum 100.0, due to standard rounding procedures.

Tau b = -.23, significant at less than .001.

Table 6. Resource Allocation Policies of Graduate Deans, Continuing Education Deans, and Chief Liberal Arts Academic Officers[a]

Resource Allocation Policies	Social Science Deans	Graduate Deans	Continuing Education Deans	Chief Liberal Arts Academic Officers
Maintain outstanding programs	56%	36%	40%	26%
Upgrade good programs	30%	34%	30%	26%
Both of the above	0%[b]	17%	22%	23%
Upgrade fair or inferior programs	22%	3%	6%	14%
Other policies	0%[b]	10%	2%	10%
N	142	310	368	371

[a]Column percentages may not sum 100.0, due to standard rounding procedures.

[b]The social science deans were presented with a forced choice question which did not include these possibilities.

Table 7. Relationships Between Teaching by (1) Graduate Deans, (2) Continuing Education Deans, and (3) Chief Liberal Arts Academic Officers and Six Indicators of Teaching Support

Indicators of Teaching Support	Graduate Deans	Continuing Education Deans	Chief Liberal Arts Academic Officers
Importance of teaching quality in program/dept. evaluations	.05 (330)	-.04 (389)	.05 (366)
Importance of student quality in program/dept. evalations	-.03 (327)	.02 (375)	.01 (348)
Availability of funds to offer graduate courses often enough	.00 (318)	-.04[a] (336)	-.03 (218)
Availability of funds for sabbaticals to improve knowledge	-.06 (323)	-.12** (344)	-.06 (350)
Weighting of teaching in tenure decisions	.02 (321)	.03 (307)	-.06 (341)
Use of merit salary increases for teaching excellence	.00 (300)	.01 (369)	-.06 (349)

[a]In the continuing education deans questionnaire, both graduate and undergraduate courses were included in this item.

**Statistically significant at less than .01.

Table 8. Selected Relationships Among Evaluation Standards, Chief Liberal Arts Academic Officers Data Set

Bivariate Relationships	Correlations	Significance Levels
Importance of publications in dept./program evaluations x Weighting of publications in tenure decisions	.44	.001
Importance of grants in dept./program evaluations x Weighting of research in tenure decisions	.40	.001
Importance of papers delivered at professional meetings in dept./program evaluations x Weighting of research in tenure decisions	.27	.001
Importance of teaching quality in dept./program evaluations x Weighting of teaching quality in tenure decisions	.22	.001
Importance of student attrition in dept./program evaluations x Weighting of teaching quality in tenure decisions	.17	.001
Importance of student job placement in dept./program evaluations x Weighting of teaching quality in tenure decisions	.04	NS
Importance of conferences or workshops given in dept./program evaluations x Weighting of involvement with external professional organizations in tenure decisions	.00	NS
Importance of conferences or workshops given in dept./program evaluations x Weighting of community service in tenure decisions	-.11	.05